

**ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE**  
**HOUSE COMMUNITY AND REGIONAL AFFAIRS STANDING COMMITTEE**

April 6, 2021

8:02 a.m.

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

Representative Sara Hannan, Co-Chair  
Representative Calvin Schrage, Co-Chair  
Representative Josiah Patkotak, Vice Chair  
Representative Harriet Drummond  
Representative Mike Prax  
Representative Ken McCarty  
Representative Kevin McCabe

**MEMBERS ABSENT**

All members present

**COMMITTEE CALENDAR**

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 14

Supporting the passage by the United States Congress of the SAFE Banking Act of 2019, sec. 110606 of the Heroes Act, or similar legislation relating to cannabis-related legitimate businesses' access to financial services.

- MOVED HJR 14 OUT OF COMMITTEE

HOUSE BILL NO. 22

"An Act relating to shared animal ownership; and relating to the sharing and sale of raw milk and raw milk products."

- MOVED HB 22 OUT OF COMMITTEE

**PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION**

BILL: HJR 14

SHORT TITLE: RESOLUTION: FED SAFE BANKING ACT/CANNABIS

SPONSOR(s): REPRESENTATIVE(s) RASMUSSEN

03/05/21	(H)	READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
03/05/21	(H)	CRA
04/01/21	(H)	CRA AT 8:00 AM BARNES 124
04/01/21	(H)	Heard & Held
04/01/21	(H)	MINUTE(CRA)
04/06/21	(H)	CRA AT 8:00 AM BARNES 124

BILL: HB 22

SHORT TITLE: SHARED ANIMAL AND RAW MILK/PRODUCTS

SPONSOR(S): REPRESENTATIVE(S) TARR

02/18/21	(H)	PREFILE RELEASED 1/8/21
02/18/21	(H)	READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
02/18/21	(H)	CRA, RES
03/30/21	(H)	CRA AT 8:00 AM BARNES 124
03/30/21	(H)	Heard & Held
03/30/21	(H)	MINUTE (CRA)
04/06/21	(H)	CRA AT 8:00 AM BARNES 124

#### WITNESS REGISTER

REPRESENTATIVE GERAN TARR

Alaska State Legislature

Juneau, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** As prime sponsor, answered questions during the hearing on HJR 14.

#### ACTION NARRATIVE

[8:02:53 AM](#)

**CO-CHAIR CALVIN SCHRAGE** called the House Community and Regional Affairs Standing Committee meeting to order at 8:02 a.m. Representatives McCarty, Drummond, Prax, McCabe, Hannan, and Schrage were present at the call to order. Representative Patkotak arrived as the meeting was in progress.

#### HJR 14-RESOLUTION: FED SAFE BANKING ACT/CANNABIS

[8:03:51 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR SCHRAGE announced that the first order of business would be HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 14, Supporting the passage by the United States Congress of the SAFE Banking Act of 2019, sec. 110606 of the Heroes Act, or similar legislation relating to cannabis-related legitimate businesses' access to financial services.

[8:04:38 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR HANNAN moved to report HJR 14 out of committee with individual recommendations and the accompanying fiscal notes.

There being no objection, HJR 14 was reported out of the House Community and Regional Affairs Standing Committee.

[8:05:02 AM](#)

The committee took an at-ease from 8:05 a.m. to 8:07 a.m.

**HB 22-SHARED ANIMAL AND RAW MILK/PRODUCTS**

[8:07:43 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR SCHRAGE announced that the final order of business would be HOUSE BILL NO. 22, "An Act relating to shared animal ownership; and relating to the sharing and sale of raw milk and raw milk products."

CO-CHAIR SCHRAGE noted this was the second hearing of HB 22, public testimony had been closed previously, and there were no amendments to be offered.

[8:08:15 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE MCCABE shared he had just visited a [herd share] goat farm outside of Big Lake, Alaska, and after witnessing the sanitized process of milking the goats, he was "favorably impressed." He said if this farm is a representation of others, then "the milk share folks are doing what they're supposed to be doing" in terms of [protecting] the health of their customers.

[8:09:36 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE MCCARTY asked whether passage of HB 22 might result in increased food security in the state.

[8:10:32 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE GERAN TARR, Alaska State Legislature, as prime sponsor of HB 22, answered yes. She said HB 22 would allow farmers additional opportunities "to build their herd share programs," give Alaskans the access to fresh, Alaska-grown products, and grow the state's economy through support of small businesses. In response to a follow-up question, said there are people already engaged in producing food for animals, and there is an opportunity for growth there. She noted that currently the Alaska Food Policy Council and the Alaska Farmers Market Association are working together to consider all factors, including the food supply chain.

REPRESENTATIVE MCCARTY expressed his concern for Alaska's food security. He said he has heard there are fields that have not been sowed for years, and he encouraged getting "all these crops going" to store food for animals.

[8:13:23 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE MCCABE proffered that the farm he had visited had about 40 head and 16 milking goats, and it goes through 1,300 bales a year; Alaska Mill and Feed gets "an inordinate amount of business from these folks." He pointed out one advantage of turning milk into cheese, for example, is that then the product can be stored longer. He predicted that HB 22 would support that. He indicated that 1,300 bales for 40 head would have "a trickle-down economic effect to other farmers."

[8:15:24 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE PRAX related that his neighbor's goats help out by eating an invasive weed that grows on his property.

[8:15:58 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR HANNAN opined a shorter supply chain would benefit Alaska. She noted that when the legislature is not in session, the sponsor's staff, Thatcher Brouwer, makes a living as a fisherman, selling his product to consumers. She stated, "The consumer side of the market is just as labor intensive as the production side of the market, whether you're a fisherman or a farmer." She said over the last 50 years, the supply chain has become more of an industrial model. She suggested that because Alaska is decentralized, shortening the supply chain is easier to do. She said she looks forward to the day she can be part of a herd share in Southeast Alaska and gave examples of the locally produced products she does buy in other parts of the state. She advised when buying local products, a person knows the source, which makes it possible to trace back any problems.

[8:19:06 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE MCCABE added to Co-Chair Hannan's comments by offered his understanding that the reason for pasteurization and homogenization had to do with the lengthening of the supply chain, in about 1910. He concurred that shortening the supply chain is beneficial.

8:20:15 AM

CO-CHAIR SCHRAGE thanked the bill sponsor for her work to "free the cheese."

8:20:27 AM

CO-CHAIR HANNAN moved to report HB 22 out of committee with individual recommendations and the accompanying fiscal notes. There being no objection, HB 22 was reported out of the House Community and Regional Affairs Standing Committee.

8:21:06 AM

**ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business before the committee, the House Community and Regional Affairs Standing Committee meeting was adjourned at 8:21 a.m.